

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OR "CAREER LADDER"**

#### **How it all fits together**

All civil service systems are based on some kind of classification system. This is simply a way to identify your job and be able to define the minimum qualifications for that job. This is especially important when the City is hiring people to do all of the different things that need to be done to keep City government working.

A job class group consists of positions which are substantially similar with respect to the kind and difficulty of work and the level of responsibility. Job classes are grouped to place broadly similar functions together with each other.

For instance, clerical and administrative classes such as Administrative Clerks, Secretaries, Records Supervisors and Office Systems Analysts are grouped together. Each group of job classes is identified by a letter designation and then each job class in the group is given a number. An Administrative Clerk I is an A11 and a Secretary is an A52. The I and II suffixes indicate whether a class is entry level (I) or experienced (II). A lead worker is usually a "Senior" such as a Senior Account Clerk.

It is important that you know how the classification system works so that you can understand how to climb the career ladder in your field. If your goal is to become an Executive Secretary, you need to begin to acquire the training and experience required to compete for secretarial positions.

Information about the education and experience requirements for each job class within City service is available from the Human Resources Division. Call or visit the Human Resources Division on the first floor of City Hall.

It is never too early to be thinking about your career goals. Most City employees began in an entry-level job and have been promoted to their current position. Once you have settled into your job, look around at the opportunities for advancement. If you see a job that appeals to you, look at the job class description sheet to learn exactly what the position requires. If you are still interested, start working toward building the education and experience required to promote into that position.

#### **Promotions**

Many positions in the City service are "flexibly staffed", that is, they are filled at the entry level with the expectation that the person hired will develop into an experienced or journey-level worker during their probation period. If the position you were hired for was advertised as an I/II position, such as Account Clerk I/II, it is flexibly staffed. The City hires people into these positions and provides them the opportunity to train and acquire the experience necessary to promote to an Account Clerk II while they are working as an Account Clerk I. In order to promote from the I level to the II level, an employee must receive satisfactory evaluations during their probation period, be recommended by their supervisor and then be certified by the department head as performing satisfactorily at the higher level.

If you are not in a "flex" position, watch for announcements of openings for promotion. Sometimes, these will be regular job announcements which are open to anyone, other times, they are "Promotional

Opportunities" - these are usually printed on blue paper and give notice of openings which are only available to City employees. In either case, you would have to fill out and submit an application, then go through the process shown on the announcement - a qualifications review panel, written test oral board or interview process. The final result is that you are placed on an eligibility list for the position. Your position on this list will reflect your level of experience, knowledge, skill and ability compared to the other candidates. The individuals in the top seven positions on this list will be interviewed and considered for any open jobs.

If you're fortunate enough to "flex" into your first promotion, that's a good start, but what if you want to go beyond Account Clerk II? Well, in that series of job classes there are a number of possibilities. You can promote to Senior Account Clerk which requires two years of experience as an Account Clerk II and some specialized training in accounting or business. From Senior Clerk, you can compete for promotion to either Principal Account Clerk or Accounting Technician. Both of these positions require more experience and some college level courses in accounting.

An Accounting Technician with three years of experience and 20 units of college studies in accounting is eligible to compete for promotion to Accountant Auditor. An Accountant Auditor II who has completed a college degree in business or accounting is qualified to compete for promotion to Senior Accountant Auditor. As you can see, there are a lot of opportunities for advancement, but you have to prepare for them and work to become qualified.

### **Moving Around - Transfers**

Once you have become a permanent employee, you can transfer to another division within your department or to another department. A transfer depends on several factors - there must be a vacancy, you have to submit an application, the supervisor or manager in the new position must offer you the job, and your transfer must be approved by the department head(s) involved.

First you must submit an application for a transfer. This can be done at any time in the Human Resources Division. There does not have to be a vacancy at the time that you submit an application. The Human Resources Division will contact you whenever a vacancy occurs and ask you if you are interested in it. These applications are kept on file for two years.

Then, there must be a vacancy in the department you want to transfer to. This must be in your job class, or a job class in which you held permanent status. (If you want to, you can take a voluntary demotion to a lower job class in order to get a transfer.) If there is a current eligible list for the position you want, the department must consider transfer applicants before they consider hiring from the eligible list.

When a vacancy occurs, the supervisor or manager will consider the transfer applicants, and if one of them is selected, the two department heads involved will decide whether they approve of the transfers. Once the department heads have given their approval and a date has been set to make the move, you begin your new job. Along with the new job, you also start a new probation period. If you do not complete probation in the new position, you would return to your former position unless it had been abolished. For more information on transfers, see **Municipal Code Section 2-1651**.

## **THE PAY SYSTEM**

### **The Salary Resolution**

The rate of pay for each position in the City service is reviewed and approved by the City Council. This is done every year when the Council passes the Salary Resolution. In the Salary Resolution, every job class is listed alphabetically under the bargaining group to which it belongs. This listing shows the salary range for each class, and breaks that range into five "steps". It also shows the "Job Code" and the length of the probation period for that class. A typical listing is shown in figure 3.1

CLASS TITLE	JOB CODE	PROB. PERIOD	SALARY RANGE				
			A	B	C	D	E
Bus Mechanic I	U57	06	2353	2471	2595	2725	2862
Bus Mechanic II	U58	06	2862	3006	3157	3315	3481
Equipment Service Worker I	U50	12	1822	1914	2010	2111	2217
Equipment Service Worker II	U51	06	2133	2240	2353	2471	2595

**Figure 3.1**

Most new City employees are hired at the "I" level and at the "A" step. Using an Equipment Service Worker I as an example, their "A" step salary is \$1,822 per month. As you can see, the probation period as an Equipment Service Worker I is 12 months. Employees receive step increases at regular intervals until they have reached the "E" step for their salary range or are promoted to another job class. The first step increase, to step "B", occurs after six months at step "A". The remaining step increases take 12 months each.

Equipment Service Worker I is not a job class that has "flexible staffing", so you go through the entire civil service process to move up. Getting a promotion to Equipment Service Worker II means waiting for an opening, putting in your application, taking the examination, and getting on the list. At Fresno Area Express, the next step up from Equipment Service Worker II is Bus Mechanic.

A Bus Mechanic I would usually be hired at the "A" step like any other new employee, unless he or she was already an Equipment Service Worker II. Looking at Figure 3.1, you can see that an Equipment Service Worker II at the "D" or "E" step who is being promoted to Mechanic I would lose money. Sometimes a newly promoted employee is started above the "A" step because of this kind of situation.

Bus Mechanic is a "flex" position - so a Bus Mechanic I will "flex" to Bus Mechanic II after 12 months and then get a step increase 6 months after they become a II. If you have questions about the salary schedules or how step increases occur, read the Salary Resolution or discuss them with your supervisor. For more information, contact the Human Resources Division and speak with the Management Analyst assigned to your department.

## **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PLAN**

The City encourages all employees to acquire new skills or training. There are several programs available to City employees which will help them to achieve their educational goals. One of the most important is the Tuition Reimbursement Program. This program, which is available to permanent employees, will reimburse them for much of the cost of attending college courses in their career field.

The program is described in detail in **Administrative Order 6-11**, but here are some of the main points:

What costs are covered? The program will pay an amount equivalent to the cost of tuition at California State University, Fresno (CSUF), and 50 percent of the cost of required books and materials. There is a limit of nine units per semester for undergraduate courses and six units per semester for graduate courses.

Where can I go to school? You may attend any accredited college or university which offers a degree program related to your career field. Remember that the program only reimburses costs equivalent to tuition at CSUF.

How do I get reimbursed? You must follow these steps:

- \$ Have your Request for Tuition Reimbursement approved before you start the course.
- \$ Pay all of the fees or costs, and keep your receipts.
- \$ Complete the course(s) with a grade of "C" or better for undergraduate courses or "B" or better for graduate courses.
- \$ Submit your approved request, receipts, and grade slips to receive reimbursement.

If you have questions about this program, refer to **Administrative Order 6-11** or contact the Human Resources Division.